

## UPCOMING TRAININGS & CONFERENCES

A full list of NDAAL's virtual learning sessions is available at

➤ [ndaa.org/training-courses/](https://ndaa.org/training-courses/).

**NDAAL's Mastering Masking Digital Course/  
On Demand Training (CLE Available)**

➤ [ndaa.org/training/mastering-masking-2/](https://ndaa.org/training/mastering-masking-2/)

**NDAAL's Human Trafficking and the Impact on  
Commercial Driver's Licenses/On Demand Training**

➤ [ndaa.org/training/human-trafficking-and-the-impact-on-commercial-drivers-licenses/](https://ndaa.org/training/human-trafficking-and-the-impact-on-commercial-drivers-licenses/)

**NDAAL's Prosecuting DUI Cases Online Course/  
On Demand Training (CLE Available)**

➤ [ndaa.org/training/prosecuting-dui-cases/](https://ndaa.org/training/prosecuting-dui-cases/)

**NDAAL's Investigation and Prosecution of Drug-Impaired  
Driving Cases Online Course/On Demand Training  
(CLE Available)**

➤ [ndaa.org/training/on-demand-learning-investigation-and-prosecution-of-drug-impaired-driving-cases/](https://ndaa.org/training/on-demand-learning-investigation-and-prosecution-of-drug-impaired-driving-cases/)

**NDAAL's 2025 Domestic Violence Conference**

October 7-9, 2025, San Diego, CA

**NDAAL's 2025 Leadership Academy**

October 21-23, 2025, Indianapolis, IN

## RESOURCES

**Impaired Driving Resources**

➤ [ndaa.org/programs/ntlc/](https://ndaa.org/programs/ntlc/)

**CDL-Related Resources**

➤ [ndaa.org/programs/ntlc/commercial-drivers-license/](https://ndaa.org/programs/ntlc/commercial-drivers-license/)

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## Driving Change— A Smarter Approach to Alcohol-Impaired Driving Offenses

### 24/7 Sobriety & Ignition Interlock Programs

*By Daniel Spino, NDAAL Director of Government and  
Legislative Affairs*

As communities seek smarter, more effective ways to reduce alcohol-impaired driving and related offenses, combining 24/7 sobriety programs with ignition interlock devices offers a proven, forward-thinking solution. These programs work together to promote accountability, prevent repeat offenses, and support recovery—without relying on incarceration. With evidence-based results, scalable implementation, and bipartisan support, this dual approach is helping jurisdictions across the country protect public safety while fostering long-term behavioral change.

In counties across the U.S., a reformative program has quietly changed the way communities address alcohol-related offenses over the years. Known as the 24/7 sobriety program, this

initiative anchors strict monitoring with immediate accountability, resulting in clear consequences and reduced recidivism among alcohol-influenced traffic offenders.

The 24/7 sobriety program first started in 2005 as a pilot in South Dakota. The program prohibits individuals from consuming alcohol, which is monitored by frequent testing. The tests are usually breath tests twice daily at the police station or jail, but the tests can also be from a secure continuous remote alcohol monitoring (SCRAM) device. Individuals participating in the program face instant, certain, and appropriate consequences for testing positive, or for failing to appear for a test, typically 24 or 48 hours in jail.

The program was specifically designed to address the high incidence of alcohol-related offenses on the road, as well as the recurring issue of repeat alcohol-impaired driving. Its goal is to reduce impaired driving through targeted intervention, enforcement, and accountability measures. Since its inception, over 43,000 people have participated in the program, with over 13 million tests administered and a passing rate of 98.6%.<sup>1</sup> It has now spread from South Dakota to jurisdictions in 10 other states, with a version of the program (Alcohol Abstinence and Monitoring Requirements) successfully operating in England and Wales.

Although 24/7 sobriety programs have demonstrated success over the past two decades, some stakeholders remain hesitant to adopt them, opting instead for more familiar solutions such as ignition interlock systems. This preference often stems from comfort with established technologies and procedures, despite the broader behavioral accountability offered by 24/7 programs.

All 50 states have adopted ignition interlock device (IID) laws which are widely recognized as the gold standard for addressing impaired driving offenses. These systems have consistently demonstrated effectiveness in preventing repeat impaired driving by requiring offenders to prove sobriety before operating a vehicle. Ignition interlock devices are in-vehicle breathalyzers that prevent the vehicle from starting if the driver's breath alcohol content is above .02. All data from the ignition interlock device, including test results and attempts at tampering, are logged onto the system and are periodically downloaded by the program administrator. Ignition interlock devices are the most certain way to prevent an alcohol-impaired individual from driving an IID equipped vehicle. While IID laws exist in all 50 states, only 31 states and the District of Columbia currently mandate IIDs for all impaired driving offenders, including first-time offenders. The remaining states have more limited requirements—some apply only to repeat offenders, others to those with high blood alcohol concentrations, and several leave the decision to judicial discretion.<sup>2</sup>

24/7 sobriety programs paired with ignition interlock devices represent a model solution by directly addressing impaired driving and repeat offenses.

In 2023, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported over 12,400 fatalities in motor vehicle crashes where at least one driver was alcohol-impaired (see Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> This equates to an average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 42 minutes.<sup>4</sup> During the 2010s, the number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities hovered around 10,000 per year, but since 2020, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of alcohol-impaired fatalities. That number has remained around 12,500 annually.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies, *24/7 Sobriety Monitoring Program*, accessed Aug. 20, 2025, available at [cades.tti.tamu.edu/24-7-sobriety-monitoring-program/](https://cades.tti.tamu.edu/24-7-sobriety-monitoring-program/).

<sup>2</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, *State Ignition Interlock Laws*, Mar. 14, 2024, accessed August 20, 2025, available at [www.ncsl.org/transportation/state-ignition-interlock-laws](https://www.ncsl.org/transportation/state-ignition-interlock-laws).

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2025, May). Alcohol-impaired driving: 2023 data (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 713). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, available at [crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813713](https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813713).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Kirley, B. B., Robison, K. L., Goodwin, A. H., Harmon, K. J., O'Brien, N. P., West, A., Harrell, S. S., Thomas, L., & Brookshire, K. (2023, November). *Countermeasures that work: A highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, 11th edition, 2023 (Report No. DOT HS 813 490). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

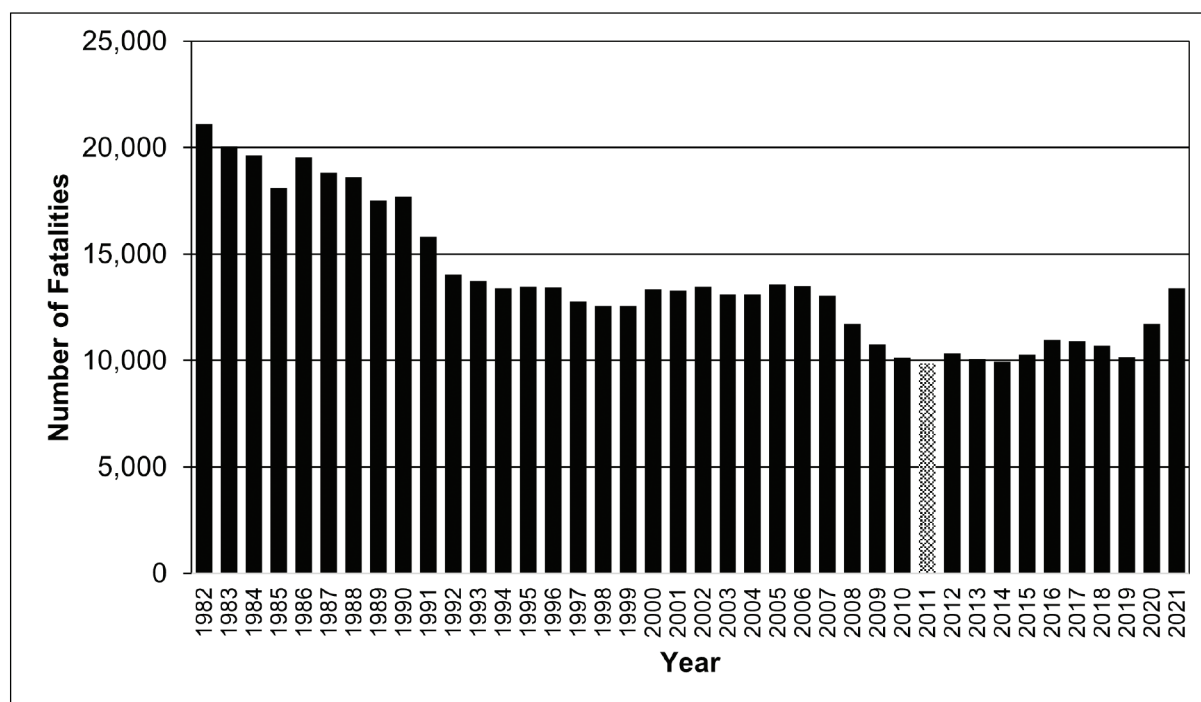


Figure 1. Number of fatalities in motor vehicle crashes where at least one driver was alcohol-impaired.  
Source: NHTSA (1982 to 2023)

The rising numbers of alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities is unacceptable, especially in light of declining alcohol consumption among young adults. Gallup conducted a survey of adults and found that young adults in the U.S. have become increasingly less likely to use alcohol over the past two decades. The poll revealed a lower percentage of 18–24 year olds reporting they never drink, drank in the past week, or drink more than they should, than in previous decades (see Figure 2).<sup>6</sup> With both the number of drinks consumed and number of drinkers declining among adults under 35, it is clear that a cultural shift is underway. To effectively reduce alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities, proven prevention strategies must align with these changing behaviors and new solutions must be identified that reflect the current patterns of risk and responsibility.

NDAA has worked closely with partners in the traffic safety community to advance initiatives that strike a thoughtful balance between meaningful reform and the protection of the local communities served. The most successful policies consistently emerge from evidence-based, data-driven programs that are scalable and adaptable to diverse jurisdictions.

The First Step Act (2018) marked a pivotal moment in bipartisan criminal justice reform, aiming to reduce unnecessary incarceration, improve prison conditions, and promote rehabilitation. Today, policymakers across the political spectrum continue to seek community-based alternatives that uphold accountability without defaulting to incarceration. Federal initiatives like the First Step Act emphasize evidence-based, scalable, and fiscally responsible approaches to justice. In this context, 24/7 sobriety programs paired with ignition interlock devices represent a model solution—meeting all these criteria while directly addressing impaired driving and repeat offenses.

<sup>6</sup> Lydia Saad, Gallup Well-Being News, *Young Adults in U.S. Drinking Less Than in Prior Decades*, Gallup, August 22, 2023, accessed August 20, 2025, available at [news.gallup.com/poll/509690/young-adults-drinking-less-prior-decades.aspx](https://news.gallup.com/poll/509690/young-adults-drinking-less-prior-decades.aspx).

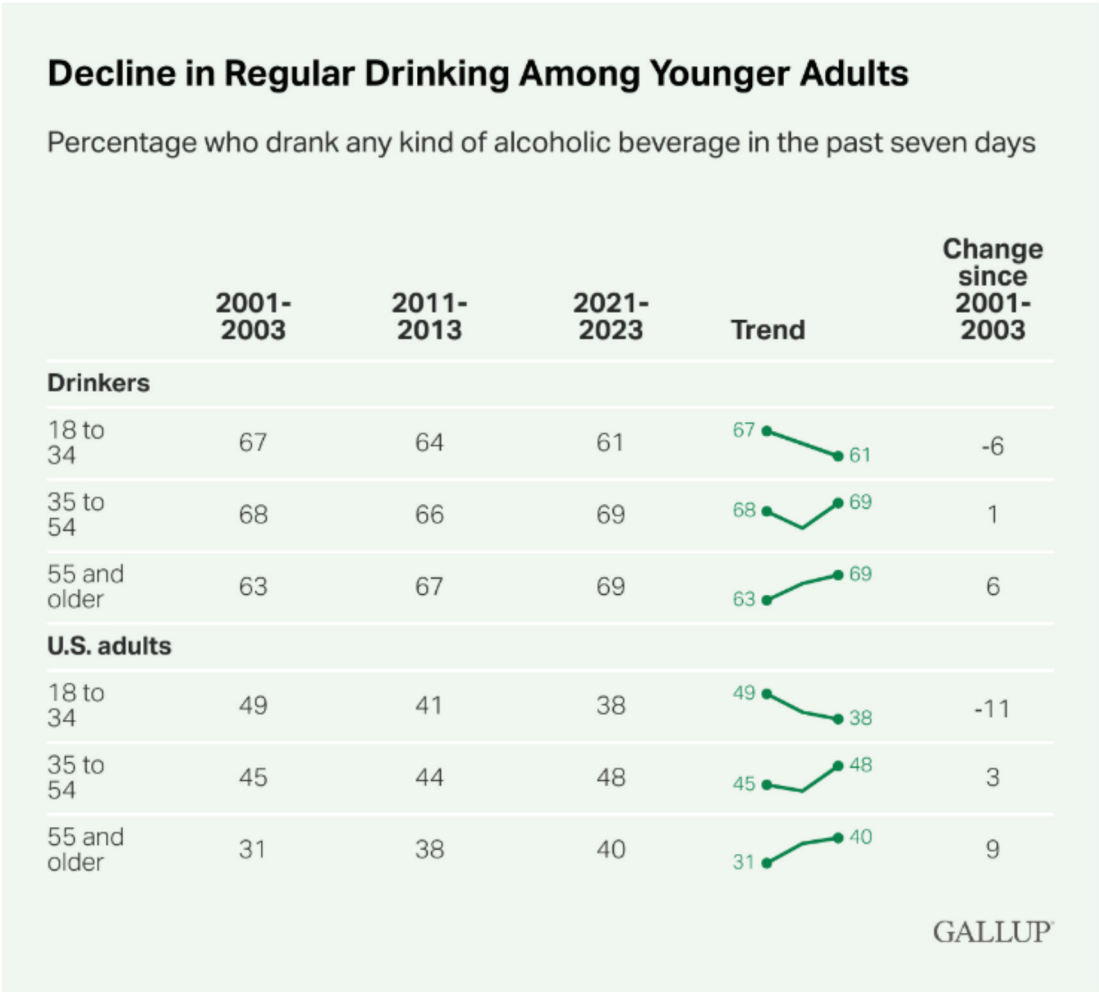


Figure 2. Decline in Regular Drinking Among Younger Adults. *Source: Gallup*

There is strong evidence that 24/7 sobriety programs reduce problematic drinking and contribute to improved public health outcomes.<sup>7</sup> By emphasizing sustained abstinence rather than occasional monitoring, these programs have shown promise in lowering the incidence of other alcohol-related crimes, such as domestic violence. Grounded in behavioral science, 24/7 sobriety programs rely on continuous monitoring and frequent testing to reinforce positive behavior. When violations occur, consequences are swift and clearly defined—creating a system of accountability that is both fair and effective. This approach not only deters repeat offenses but also supports long-term behavioral change.

Ignition interlock devices act as technological gatekeepers, preventing vehicle operation when a participant attempts to drive under the influence. These devices alone have been shown to reduce repeat impaired driving offenses by up to 70%.<sup>8</sup> While 24/7 sobriety programs rely on scheduled testing to verify abstinence, those intervals can leave gaps during which impaired driving may still occur. Ignition interlocks fill that gap by providing real-time, continuous protection.

<sup>7</sup> Kilmer B, Nicosia N, Heaton P, Midgette G. Efficacy of frequent monitoring with swift, certain, and modest sanctions for violations: insights from South Dakota's 24/7 Sobriety Project. *Am J Public Health*. 2013 Jan;103(1):e37–43.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use*, Impaired Driving CDC, Apr. 24, 2024, accessed August 20, 2025, available at [www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/ignition-interlock/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/ignition-interlock/index.html).



When used together, these tools offer a comprehensive solution—one that is rehabilitative for the offender and protective of the public. This dual approach reinforces accountability through immediate consequences while promoting long-term behavioral change. It's a win-win strategy that advances both justice and public safety. Together, 24/7 sobriety programs and ignition interlock devices offer a powerful, complementary strategy for reducing repeat offenses, holding offenders accountable without over-reliance on incarceration, and supporting recovery and reintegration. While no single solution can eliminate all alcohol-related traffic fatalities or crimes, these two tools represent one of the most effective and appropriate options currently available. 24/7 sobriety programs promote sustained abstinence through regular testing and behavioral accountability, while ignition interlock devices serve as real-time safeguards, preventing impaired individuals from operating a vehicle. As innovations like smartphone-based breathalyzers and chain-of-custody apps become more widespread, the logistical burden of implementing these programs continues to decrease.

Though 24/7 programs may be seen as the newer, more innovative solution, ignition interlock systems remain a critical complement. By combining regular abstinence verification with in-vehicle enforcement, communities can build a comprehensive, evidence-based framework that prioritizes public safety and supports offender rehabilitation. For jurisdictions already using ignition interlocks, layering in a 24/7 sobriety program can transform a single-focus traffic safety tool into a broader public health and safety initiative—one that is scalable, cost-effective, and aligned with modern justice reform efforts.

As conversations around public safety and rehabilitation evolve, some advocate for 24/7 sobriety programs, while others favor ignition interlock devices. However, when implemented together, these tools offer the most compelling model—one that prioritizes public safety, enforces strict accountability, and delivers evidence-based results. By championing both initiatives in tandem, prosecutors can effectively reduce alcohol-related offenses, conserve jail space, and foster safer communities. These programs deliver swift, measurable consequences for impaired driving while supporting long-term behavioral change. It's a timely, bipartisan solution at the intersection of justice, health, and public safety.

By combining regular abstinence verification with in-vehicle enforcement, communities can build a comprehensive, evidence-based framework that prioritizes public safety and supports offender rehabilitation.

### About the Author

Daniel Spino is National District Attorneys Association's Director of Government & Legislative Affairs. He serves as NDAA's primary liaison with Congress, the Administration, and other stakeholders on matters impacting prosecutors and the criminal justice system at the federal level. He guides NDAA's legislative strategy by drafting policies, contributing testimony, and mobilizing members for advocacy campaigns.

Prior to NDAA, Daniel served three years as the Legislative Affairs Manager at the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, where he successfully advocated for program reauthorization and legislation assisting in the recovery of missing and exploited children. Previously, he spent over 6 years with the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. As a Professional Staff Member, his portfolio included issues such as the Census, federal grants and improper payments, D.C. education and municipality issues, the National Archives, and general government oversight.

Daniel holds a B.A. in English with a minor in Law from George Mason University.

